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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4363  
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFIS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 001221

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2007

TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR PL IQ GG

SUBJECT: POLAND-IRAQ: FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSES CONCERN  
OVER POTENTIAL DOMESTIC POLITICAL FALL-OUT FROM CHANGES IN  
LEADERSHIP OF

REF: A. STATE 064773

1B. WARSAW 1163

Classified By: DCM Ken Hillas, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Polish Foreign Minister Anna Fotyga called Ambassador in on Friday, May 25, to discuss the changes in the leadership structure of the Multi-National Division Center South (MND-CS) in Iraq, in particular the decision to create a new command (MND-C) that would assume command of MND-CS elements that are based at Camp Delta (Al-Kut), and consolidate Polish forces in Camp Echo in Al-Diwaniyah (Reftel A). Fotyga said that there was some "difficulty" in understanding the situation in light of Ref A non-paper, and that she wanted some "clarification" of the developments, specifically the structure and operations of MND-C. Ambassador and Defense Attaché reviewed the changes being made, with an emphasis on the operational necessity for the changes, and noted that the Polish Ministry of Defense and military leadership had agreed to the changes at the most recent Force Generation Conference.

12. (C) Fotyga expressed surprise at the number of Georgian troops that would be sent to Iraq, noting it represented a significant proportion of Georgia's overall military strength. After a few technical questions about the structure of the new command, and the apportionment of troops between MND-CS and MND-C, she noted that this change had the potential to cause internal political problems for the government, especially given the opposition to the Iraq and Afghanistan deployments by the Law and Justice (PiS) party's junior coalition partners. However, she did not/not ask for a change in this decision. She repeated twice that the political leadership "has to be careful" with regard to any decisions about Iraq, because the coalition partners would seek to exploit "every tiny item." She noted she had discussed the matter "very softly" with Minister of Defense Szczyglo, and then closed discussion of the issue by asking our understanding. The Ambassador assured her that the U.S. values Poland's role in Iraq and that the decisions made there were operationally based. PolCouns added that the realignment would be beneficial to Georgia's NATO aspirations, to which Fotyga enthusiastically agreed.

13. (C) Comment: This was the first significant political reaction we have had to reftel demarche. We believe, given the way Minister Fotyga presented the issues and then quickly moved on to other subjects, that the PiS leadership remains nervous about its coalition partners' eagerness to exploit any issue related to Iraq. Fotyga's failure to request a reversal of Georgia/MND-C decision suggests the Polish Government has accepted this step, even if it harbors concerns. End Comment.

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